

tal vision also allows the subtle to carry the future possibilities for the transfiguration of all created things. Love's way is to come down, and suffer, for a finally incarnational universe in which all things are in communion.

Transpersonal psychology, as we have it to date, can be criticised as resting in both a limited and very biased *a priori* frame. It ignores heart, personhood, and sacramentalism, and this says it is on a very specific path — but mystical religions do not necessarily follow this path. Other

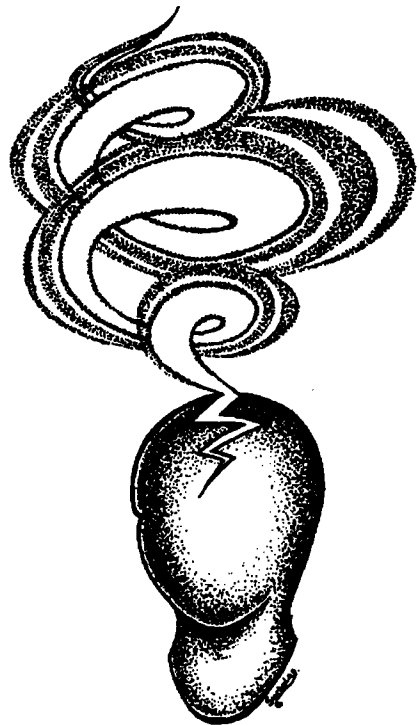
paths which aim not so much at transcendence or expansion but holiness, exist. And their practices are also wider and different. For example, meditation belongs to nous, contemplation to soul, and prayer to heart. Holiness needs all three. Transpersonal psychology seems to have fallen into the dichotomy of far east ('spirituality') v. far west ('materialism'), but in the process has lost what I would call the third way, the way of traditions that belong to neither East nor West but to where they meet.

Striking at Heads

Surbala Morgan

Beware the quest for scientific respectability when self-awareness is left out of the formula! My experience of a system where knowledge supersedes wisdom and theory overrides practice makes me chilled at the possibility of a common future for other therapy/counselling training courses.

I am coming to the end of my training in clinical psychology, where it seems that academic excellence is paramount and the acquisition of a 'toolbox' of clinical skills is seen as sufficient to set you loose on humanity. Knowing my self — the medium through which I am supposed to apply these 'skills' — is apparently unnecessary! What matters is passing the exams.



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It could happen — is happening — within other types of therapy trainings. To counteract the current cultural shift against psychotherapy, we are forced to uphold its empirical aspects and solid, scientific basis. I welcome the current moves towards standardisation and accreditation as a safeguard for all who want to be secure and contained within clear, ethical boundaries. Having experienced, in my time, the wild excesses of groups led by the unorthodox and untrained, I really appreciate the value of monitoring and vetting.

At the same time, I fear the kind of formalisation of training where the 'psyche' is taken out of psychology. All that remains is 'logos' — rational, quantifiable and inhuman. There is nothing wrong with acquiring a database of knowledge. Knowledge can be juicy and exciting, but this happens only when it touches a chord and resonates with something I feel and experience. Then facts and theories become alive and meaningful. Knowledge is dead when I am cut off from myself. To place the emphasis on learning 'theories of therapy' and miss out the human factor — my self in relation to the other — is dangerous. A 'toolbox' of clinical skills can become a lethal weapon.

Sometimes in my clinical training I have felt, just like the psychiatrist in Shaffer's play *Equus*, that 'I stand in the dark with a pick in my hand, striking at heads'. I am 'doing to' the other, rather than 'being with' them. If I am blind to myself, how can I have insight into another's confusion? Sometimes, by chance, I might hit the right spot, tap a well-spring of energy with my 'therapeutic tool', but what if I miss? The whole approach of the 'scien-

tist-practitioner' fails if I am cut off from myself, unfamiliar with my being.

There is a great big gap in the structure of my clinical training, and it only became clear when I began another part-time training — my 'bit on the side' — in gestalt therapy. Suddenly I was in a different world where self-awareness and exploration have primary importance, where the quality of connection with all parts of myself and between myself and the other is recognised.

This way of working may seem obvious to those who have never known a different approach. Not so to my clinical psychology peers and mentors. Starting from the self is seen as 'fringe' and alien to most of them. Good, hard-core logic and science is what we are trained to believe in. For me, though, science can never be the 'core', only the structure. Not just the keystone, but the essence is the self . . . myself.

So when I see moves towards the academic systematisation of training courses I feel a frisson of dread. If the swing towards intellectualism goes too far, real wisdom — self-awareness — is lost. What use is a string of qualifications when faced with another human being in pain? Jung said, 'Learn your theories as well as you can, but put them aside when you touch the miracle of the living soul. Not theories but your own creative individuality alone must decide . . .'. Theories only come alive when I am alive to myself. In-sight illuminates my way of being with myself and the other. I need to go beyond the cerebral to something closer to the numinous. Instead of 'striking at heads', let me reach out and touch souls — beginning with my own.